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RUEPGEA/CDR650THMIGP SHAPE BE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRISTINA 000241

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR, EUR/SCE, NSC FOR BRAUN, USUN FOR DREW
SCHUFLETOWSKI, USOSCE FOR STEVE STEGER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [AID](#) [KV](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR THE MAY 16-17 VISIT OF
ADMINISTRATOR FORE

Classified By: CDA TINA KAIDANOW FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Your visit to Kosovo will be regarded here by the leadership and the public as a welcome sign of continuing U.S. support for Kosovo, manifest both in the political arena and in concrete assistance offered. We have a large and varied assistance program that targets a range of sectors in Kosovo, but is focused heavily on three priorities: strengthening rule of law as a prerequisite for stable development; promoting a sustainable economic base for Kosovo's future; and enhancing democracy, in particular by securing the rights of minority communities. Kosovo has seen progress on all these fronts in recent years, and Kosovo's leaders will describe for you their pride in accomplishments made. Serious challenges remain, however, and all your interlocutors will be equally frank about this.

¶2. (C) The primary political preoccupation here now is with the ongoing transition from UN administration in Kosovo to the assumption of key responsibilities by the Kosovo government. Important questions remain unanswered -- when and how will the UN presence here "reconfigure"; when will the EU presences foreseen in the Ahtisaari settlement plan be able to fully deploy; and how will this international transition be squared with the authorities assumed by the Kosovo government under its new constitution, which will come into effect on June 15. Despite the uncertainties, Kosovo leaders have done a good job in managing public expectations and have already acknowledged that the UN presence here -- not particularly popular -- will remain in Kosovo under UNSC 1244 in some form after June 15, though they have been equally clear with the UN hierarchy in New York that they expect changes in UNMIK's mandate after that date. Kosovo leaders have also managed to contain, at least thus far, anxieties over the situation in the north, where hardline Serb provocations have led to violent confrontation with international peacekeepers.

¶3. (C) In this environment, assurances of continuing U.S. and European engagement on Kosovo's behalf mean quite a lot. Kosovo's leadership, its political parties, civil society and the public at large trust the United States as the guarantor of peace and stability here. Even Kosovo's Serb community, trapped between its unhappiness over Kosovo's independence and deep skepticism that the Serbian government in Belgrade really cares about its fate, respects the U.S. as an

interlocutor and as a source of aid and advocacy.

14. (C) This is particularly the case with Serbs living in the southern enclaves (in fact the majority of Kosovo Serbs live south of the Ibar River), who understand for the most part the inevitability of independence and want a better relationship with Kosovo authorities, but have been told by Belgrade to leave their public sector jobs and, in essence, separate themselves entirely from the Albanian community. This is not only impractical but dangerous over the long-term, exacerbating mutual mistrust and potentially causing a backlash, though ethnic Albanians did swallow -- painfully -- the holding of illegal local elections in Kosovo by the Serbian government on May 11. You will meet with moderate representatives of the Kosovo Serb community, who were buoyed by the resounding pro-European vote in Serbian parliamentary elections but still harbor doubts about their own fate in Kosovo should Serbian President Tadic fail to form a democratically-oriented government in Belgrade.

15. (C) We have worked closely with the Kosovars to keep them focused on the milestones ahead, including the need for more international recognitions and the impending donors' conference, which will bring significant and much-needed investment in Kosovo's public sector and infrastructure. Kosovo's government is making a good faith effort to outline its development priorities for this conference, and you can encourage the President and Prime Minister to ensure that their presentation at the conference is clear and compelling.

You can also advise them to do everything possible to maintain stability in the coming months in order to reassure

PRISTINA 00000241 002 OF 002

donors, as well as private investors and governments on the verge of recognition, that Kosovo is a responsible member of the international community.

16. (C) Other events during your trip will provide you with insights into the programs we are busily supporting, and also give you a sense of our very fruitful cooperation with U.S. KFOR in building confidence through small infrastructure projects in their area of responsibility -- which contains the largest number of Serb communities anywhere in Kosovo. We are pleased and proud to host you for this visit, and the people you speak with in Kosovo will undoubtedly echo the same sentiment.

KAIDANOW